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ABSTRACT

Extracts of a speech touch upon communication, linguistic studies of French, a coherent language program, teacher education, and exchange programs. Recommendations list areas in which further improvement in foreign language teaching is possible under the headings: (1) research, (2) teacher training--both initial and inservice, (3) further education, (4) schools, (5) equipment and material for language teaching, and (6) suggestions for international action. (RL)

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Educational Developments in Europe

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Modern languages

During the 13th session of the C.C.C., Dr. Riddy, Staff Inspector for Modern Languages — Department of Education and Science (United Kingdom), introduced the general debate on "Modern Languages and the World of To-day". *Extracts of this speech are given here.*

"The problem, presented by the simple fact that different nations generally have different languages — sometimes, indeed, one nation has more than one language — has preoccupied man almost since the birth of time. Indeed, if one accepts the biblical version, since that day when men had to give up the grandiose scheme for building a skyscraper to end all skyscrapers at Babel, not apparently because they lacked the technical know-how or even the material means, but quite simply because the architects, engineers, foremen and builders were unable to communicate with each other in a single language."

It was in these terms that Dr. Riddy began his introductory talk on modern languages.

"There is no need for me to sketch the history of men's attempt to overcome the problems of foreign languages or even to dwell upon the importance in the Europe of today of finding a solution to the problem. The European Cultural Convention in Article 2 stresses the need for each contracting country to promote the study of modern languages within its borders. The Ministers of Education meeting in their 2nd and 3rd Conferences in Hamburg and Rome in 1961 and 1962 adopted resolutions on the subject and you, yourselves, decided to make modern languages a major project.

As time passes it becomes ever clearer that if that more integrated Europe which everyone desires to see is really to take shape, it must be founded in each country on the widest possible knowledge of the other peoples who will make up the community, and for such knowledge the peoples must be able to communicate with each other. Co-operation can no longer be regarded as something to be left to a few experts as used to be the case. It must now involve virtually every citizen...

All this implies a vast extension of the provision for modern language study in most of the member States of the Council. So it is just as well that we now know far more than we did, say 20 years ago, about languages, about their nature, about how they are constructed, especially the spoken language, this thanks to recent linguistic research."

Dr. Riddy then emphasised the new conception in modern language teaching.

"It is also just as well that science and technology have made available for teachers certain pieces of apparatus, notably the means of recording speech, that greatly assist in the task of teaching, especially, of course, the spoken forms of language. And it is also just as well that teachers have reappraised their aims and their teaching methods which, now, are much more suited to language teaching on a large scale, than the traditional methods of grammar study combined with translation which were in vogue in many countries up to and even beyond the second World War.

A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

The main feature, perhaps, of the new ideas about language teaching — clearly I cannot go into detail — is that language is regarded first and foremost as a means of communication. This means of course spoken communication, but also communication by writing. The new methods put in the forefront, in time at any rate, if not necessarily in final importance, practical aims. The student, the boy or the girl, is taught the foreign language, rather than, as often used to be the case, about the foreign language. A language is still regarded, of course, as the key to a foreign culture and it is very important that it should never lose this position. But, it is now seen that that key is none the worse if it is able to open the door of ordinary, everyday conversation. In other words, if you understand what the man and woman in London is saying today, is doesn't prevent your understanding what Shakespeare and the other great writers have said. In fact, it helps you to understand Shakespeare as he is understood at the present time by ordinary men and women in Britain. And the example, of

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course, applies to all countries. As to the new methods, the new aims, these have been set out in this booklet which I had the honour of helping to prepare,* and I need not, I think, quote them now, though they certainly have, I think, some interest."

COMBINATIONS OF 37 WORDS

Having summarised the work which has been achieved under the auspices of the Council of Europe since 1960, he continued :

"There was first of all the meeting in Paris in 1960 which was in a very real sense a starting point. It made known to the delegates from the other countries the results of the research that had recently been conducted into the French language, and which had produced some results that on the face of it were astonishing. It showed, for instance, that 50 % of ordinary French conversation consists of permutations and combinations of a mere 37 words. Second, that Conference enabled the delegates to become familiar with the materials and methods which the French had devised for teaching French to adult beginners. This was the audio-visual method, as it is commonly described. This Conference was followed-up by one in London in 1962, and the general conclusion was that materials and methods conceived on similar lines to those seen in Paris, but adapted to the circumstances of schools could be of great assistance in the teaching of languages to boys and girls in secondary schools. Then followed a conference at Stockholm in 1963 which offered convincing proof that a modern language can be taught to a far greater range of pupils than had previously been thought possible.

Among the other important confrontations I ought to mention the conference at Madrid on the teaching of *civilisation,* the one at Ostia which not merely brought out the urgent need to revise examinations to suit modern methods and aims, but also produced that important agreed statement to which I have already referred, on the general aims of modern language teaching.

There was also the conference at Ankara on the new methods of producing suitable materials for study in schools and colleges, there was the course at Reading on the teaching of modern languages to pupils of primary age, that is to say below the age of 10. The general conclusion was that such teaching could be very much in place, but it needed most careful preparation to make certain that at the secondary stage, certain resulting problems could be met. And then there was the conference at Oslo on the teaching of modern languages to future teachers in the colleges of education.

Taken as a whole, it seems to me that these activities represent a very considerable effort in the field of modern languages. Almost all the major problems have been given at any rate a first examination. The views of various national experts on them have been collected, have been made known to member Governments and also through a variety of publications to a wider circle of interested persons."

Dr. Liddy then emphasised the necessity of putting the experts' conclusions into action.

"What now remains for the most part, in my opinion, is to give effect in all the countries to the expert findings and the question to be settled is the best means of ensuring this consummation which is so devoutly to be desired. The matter has been under consideration in different quarters as you know. The Report last March of the Committee of Three not only recommended concentration on an imaginative theme *"Europe 20 years on"*, but urged that steps should be taken to ensure that every secondary school leaver should possess a high degree of fluency in a modern language and believed that this goal be realised by intensive application of modern methods supported by modern equipment and by a programme of mutual, technical assistance. It even thought — though here I should have to have personal reservations — that that goal could be reached in 10 years' time.

The General and Technical Education Committee, at its meeting last October, suggested that the necessary action should take the form of what it called a *European modern languages campaign,* and it approved a proposal to convene a group of experts last month to sketch the broad outlines of such a campaign, the Committee having expressed its views on a number of important issues that would almost certainly have to come under consideration. And finally, perhaps, one may mention that last month the Consultative Assembly approved a motion for a resolution, which is to be debated next Autumn, and which in its present form urges the launching of a large scale campaign in national parliaments to promote the teaching of modern languages and also recommends again that all European pupils at school should be taught at least one foreign language."

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*) *"Modern Languages and the world of today" (CCC/ AIDELA, 1967).*

A PROGRAMME FOR THE NEXT 20 YEARS

Dr. Riddy insisted on the importance of a coherent programme.

"Broadly what is envisaged is a programme for Europe in modern languages for the next 20 years, not a make do-patch-up, make do-and-mend programme, but a programme which can be followed with logical conclusion over 20 years. This programme, and this is very important, would embrace all levels of language teaching from primary schools to the universities and to adults who have ceased formal regular contact with institutions of teaching. This is, in my opinion, a most important point. Modern languages are one, our national needs are also one, and it is right that the programme should be regarded as one, even though naturally it cuts across the lines dividing the various divisions in the Secretariat. The emphasis would be on the expansion of the teaching to the maximum extent possible and on improving the quality of the teaching. Because of the expansion a great effort would have to be made to produce more teachers qualified to provide instruction and because it would be quite erroneous for us to suppose that at this moment in time, we know all that is ever going to be known about the most effective methods for teaching, and that we already possess the most effective apparatus for this teaching. Teacher training must be seen as an operation that will go on throughout the length of the teacher's service in schools and elsewhere. In another sphere we have become familiar with the concept of lifelong education. As regards teachers of modern languages, and this may apply to other subjects, for all I know, we certainly must now accept the idea of lifelong training of teachers."

Having examined the principle lines of the programme, Dr. Riddy continued :

"About the introduction (where this has not already been done) of at least one widely spoken foreign language into the curriculum of all pupils aged about 10 or 11 and continuation of this instruction during the whole of their career; much might be said on this subject. In my opinion, it is absolutely impossible of fulfilment. It can of course be carried out in certain countries. Sweden will find no difficulty because it achieves it already. The Netherlands, the West Berliners have achieved it already, Cyprus has achieved it already. Norway, certain other Länder in Germany and Austria are quite near to achieving this goal, but there are other countries that are not. My own country is one. Despite the enormous efforts we are making about 60 % of our boys and girls of secondary school age. Would it be possible for France in its more thinly populated rural areas to reach this goal? Would it be possible for Italy, Spain, Greece or Turkey? The answer may be "yes" in some cases, but I suspect that in some cases the answer would be "no".

4 TO 7 YEARS TO TRAIN A TEACHER

After all, before the pupils can be taught, the teachers have got to be trained. It takes from four to seven years to train a teacher: and you can't by waving a magic wand suddenly find places for twice the number of modern language teachers, which we, for instance, would have to do in Britain. This would need planning."

"One can preserve the basic principle behind this, namely that a modern language should, as soon as possible, be taught to all boys and girls, but we must attach no time limit of five to ten years, at least so I would suggest."

Dr. Riddy also brought up the question of the revision of school examinations and tests :

"Revision of school examinations and tests — well, clearly this revision is necessary, but, not solely in order to accord due prominence to oral performance, important though that is. What is perhaps far more important is that the whole conception of examinations should be brought into line with the spirit and methods of teaching these days. Now at present, in most countries, translation occupies a large part in the final examination that the students take. It would not however occupy this place in the teaching, were it not for the fact that teachers have to prepare the students for that examination. So that also would require some amendment of the programme. As regards the installation of special facilities, surely we would want equipment other than that which could enable schools merely to take advantage of school radio and television programmes. We want them to be provided with the means for using audio-visual courses and so on . . ."

Dr. Riddy then talked about the training of teachers which is an essential point in the realisation of the CCC programme.

"The revolution that has taken place in thinking about aims and methods of modern language teaching in the last 10 years has been so vast in its scope that even well-trained teachers who received their initial training 10 years ago are now quite out of date in their knowledge, unless they have taken some special means to follow the latest developments. It is here, of course, that the experience of member States who have their own schemes of

in-service training could be very useful for those States which have still to make a start in this direction.

It is not only teaching methods that change. Languages themselves change with alarming rapidity these days under the impact of radio, and other pressures, but even more rapid is the change that takes place in the countries themselves. Germany, France, Italy, Belgium and Britain are, in many respects, quite different in 1968 from what they were in 1958. Now no greater dis-service could be done to the cause of European unity and co-operation that the purveying of out-of-date information about the member States. If we want our boys and girls, our students, our adults to be well-informed, then our teachers, too, must be well-informed, and there is no surer or better way, Sir, I would suggest, of ensuring that teachers are well-informed than by enabling them to live in the foreign country at frequent intervals. Unquestionably the best way of achieving this goal would be to give the teachers leave regularly with pay, in the form of a sabbatical term, enabling them to go abroad for the whole term and study. But such is the general shortage of teachers that this is hardly feasible on other than a very small scale.

In the circumstances, I think the best arrangement, certainly where two countries are concerned who teach each other's language to more or less the same extent, is interchange, whereby the teacher from one country would go and take the place of the teacher in the other country und would be replaced in his own school by that teacher. This could be done without anybody having to pay more from the point of view of salary, after all if it were English and French teachers who were concerned, the English authorities would continue to pay the English teacher, the French authorities would continue to pay the French teacher, and both authorities would get for nothing, so to speak, the services of the foreign teacher. I have no doubt that given good will the answer could be found to this . . ."

Dr. Riddy ended by saying that the importance of the subject deserved to be amplified but that his talk limited itself to an introduction to a general debate.

Recommendations for modern language teaching

The publication "Modern Languages and the World of To-day", of which Dr. Riddy is one of the authors, gives a complete view of the progress of modern language teaching. This study provides recommendations on action to be taken, which can be found at the end of the volume and which we think would be of interest if reproduced below.

A. *Research*

1. Research is needed into the vocabulary and structures of European languages, on the lines of that already undertaken in respect of French.
2. Research should be put in hand to provide reliable information on the merits of one method of teaching compared with another.
3. More research is required into the following subjects :
   - — the *norms* determining the standard level of European languages ;
   - — the *evolutionary trends* in a given language ;
   - — the characteristics of *specialised languages* (e. g. of trades and professions) ;
   - — *phraseological units* in translation from one language into another ;
   - — the *intelligence factors* involved in the learning of a foreign language ;
   - — the *rôle of previous learning* (e. g. use of mother tongue in teaching ; false correspondences in sounds and structures ; transfer effects) ;
   - — the rôle of *overt* versus *covert learning* for sounds, morphemes and structures, i. e. rules versus patterns ;
   - — the rôle of contextualisation through *visual* media and the message of the picture ;
   - — *individual differences* in the rate of learning of receptive and productive skills in teaching groups of the normal kind ;
   - — the value of *study visits*, at different age levels, to a country where the target language is spoken ;
   - — compilation and administration of tests for measuring oral performance.

B. *University teaching of modern languages*

1. The necessity of a knowledge of modern languages in the *professional life* of many categories of Europeans calls for extensive consideration of teaching material specifically adapted to these needs (motivation, centres of interest, types of language, phraseology and frequent structures). The practice of giving courses on specialised subjects in the foreign language(s) could well be extended.
2. *Curricula* in higher education should provide a logical sequel to those at the secondary level. In many cases, emphasis should be laid on the contemporary period (language, cultural background, literature), and a grounding in general and applied linguistics is desirable for future specialists in languages. Examinations should reflect these options and therefore accord an important place to oral tests.
3. The creation of *Inter-Faculty Language Centres* would make possible interdisciplinary contacts, which are most urgently required. They would help to provide the vital link in teaching between research and practice and would be able to keep teachers regularly informed of new advances by means of refresher courses and up-to-date documentation.

C. *Teacher training*

(i) *Initial training*

1. It is desirable that, at least for future teachers, much more prominence should be given in university courses to the study of the spoken language.
2. All future graduate teachers of languages should be made familiar with the main findings of linguistic science.
3. If the desired expansion of the teaching of modern languages in schools is to take place, the study of languages will have to occupy an important place in the curriculum of colleges of education.
4. Language courses in colleges of education will need to pay attention to means of improving students' powers of oral expression, of acquainting them with the findings of linguistic science, and of informing them about modern methods of teaching.

5. Whenever possible, students in colleges of education should be enabled to extend their knowledge of the country or countries whose language they are studying, by such means as substantial periods of study abroad (as an integral part of their college language course) or by service as *assistants* in foreign schools for six or twelve months.
6. Special study is needed of the problems of providing residence abroad for students in countries whose own language is little studied in the foreign country concerned.
7. Interchanges of students in colleges of education, such as are already in operation in accordance with the discussions held at Sèvres in 1963, are much to be welcomed. Here again, special consideration is necessary to solve the problems of the students mentioned in the preceding paragraph.
8. Colleges of education should be well equipped with modern apparatus for the teaching of languages.

(ii) *In-service training*

1. All serving teachers of modern languages should study carefully the new methods of language teaching.
2. Courses in the new methods of teaching should be organised, to acquaint serving teachers with the findings of modern linguistic science, with the teaching apparatus now available, and with ways of using this apparatus most efficiently.
3. Participation by selected teachers of anyone country in short courses organised primarily for teachers of another country would contribute greatly to the cross-fertilisation of thinking about the teaching of modern languages in Europe.
4. When a rapid extension of modern language teaching in schools is planned, emergency courses of training both in the language concerned and in modern methods of teaching it are needed for serving teachers.
5. More use might well be made of radio broadcasts and television programmes for the in-service training of teachers.
6. Teachers of modern languages need to keep abreast of developments in the countries whose languages they teach and in the languages themselves. For this purpose, regular visits to the foreign countries are highly desirable. An extended visit lasting say four months every five years is to be advocated. For such visits, schemes of sabbatical leave would be ideal; but, in present circumstances, post-to-post interchange would probably be the most feasible arrangement. Here once more, a determined effort should be made to solve the problem of interchange for teachers whose native language is little studies abroad.
7. Special courses of training should be arranged for those engaged in teaching evening classes.

D. *Further education*

1. In establishments of further education, for which language teaching has become almost everywhere an important responsibility, most students will desire to relate their language study as early as possible to their main professional studies. It is most desirable that the language teacher should be acquainted with the students' special subject, but team-teaching, involving close collaboration between the language teacher and the teachers of the specialised subjects, will be required if the students' needs are to be properly catered for.
2. Language courses in colleges of further education must be related to the special requirements of students, but they should normally provide for all the principal aspects of language study, including some study of the foreign country and its culture.
3. Establishments of further education should be provided with good libraries, especially of modern literature (fictional, scientific, technical, etc.), and with other aids to language study.
4. In order to consolidate the excellent results of many intensive courses, the courses should wherever practicable be followed by visits to the foreign country. Such visits will generally be most profitable when the students are able to work in a concern similar to the one in which they work or will work at home.
5. Improved methods of selection should be used in order to cut down the high "wastage" rates on some courses for interpreters.
6. It is important that, in establishments of further education, language teachers and their teaching subjects should have the same status as the teachers and subjects on the technical side.
7. Teachers of language classes held in the evening should have access to the full range of teaching aids which are available on the premises to the day teachers.
8. Consideration should be given to the possibility of integrating radio and television language courses in the courses followed by evening classes.

E. *Schools*

1. There are wide differences in the percentage of pupils aged 11 and above who study a modern language (from 100 % to less than 40 %) in the various countries. In some countries pupils do not even continue their courses in the first modern language throughout their school careers.
2. No particular problem seems to arise in the teaching of a modern language in the early stages to classes of mixed ability. Special consideration is needed of the problems that are presented later on. At present, the solution to these problems seems to lie in the organisation of "sets" or in the use of group methods of teaching.
3. There is increasing realisation that, for fully effective, teaching of modern languages, special "subject" rooms are needed.
4. Well-stocked libraries (class, "subject"-room, main school) are invaluable.
5. Equipment is needed to enable schools to take advantage of school radio and television programmes in languages. Other aids to teaching include films and closed-circuit television (though experience in the latter is not yet extensive).
6. Except in a few countries, the proportion of pupils who start a second modern language in secondary schools is still low. Experiments in the use of new methods of language teaching are desirable in order that well-documented evidence may be adduced on the proportion of boys and girls who coud make appreciable progress in a second-language course.
7. In many secondary schools the second modern language is in direct competition with Latin. Linguistically able boys and girls who start Latin early should be given the opportunity of taking up the study of a second modern language later on.
8. Linguistic science has an important rôle to play in enabling teachers to devise appropriate tests for assessing their pupils' mastery of material learnt.
9. Prognostic tests appear to have a useful part to play in providing teachers with information enabling them to anticipate the individual pupil's difficulties in learning a modern language.
10. Special consideration is needed of the many problems presented by final school examinations, especially when the examinations are externally organised. In such examinations a much more important place than traditionally should be accorded to oral performance. Research to devise conveniently administered tests for measuring oral performance is required.

F. *Equipment and material for language teaching*

1. The production of new teaching materials making use of all the modern aids, the formation of combined teams of experienced language teachers, media specialists and learning psychologists, appears to be necessary.
2. Forms of collaboration between the producers of course-materials and educational authorities should be established in order to promote the production and the distribution of new teaching materials. Legal restrictions (e. g. copyright) which put an obstacle to the production and use of material for teaching purposes should be eased. Forms of distribution which make access and purchase difficult should be avoided.
3. A network of central, regional and local centres should be established for the efficient flow of information and for instruction concerning modern teaching aids.
4. Instructional aids should be readily available in schools, and suitable storage and working space should be provided.
5. Training in the handling of equipment and materials should form part of teachers' training, initial as well as in-service.
6. Manufacturers of teaching equipment and materials should be urged to agree upon standards for such things as tape and film widths, running speeds, technical quality of sound and picture, labelling indications, etc. Minimum requirements concerning performance and robustness should be agreed on for such equipment as tape-recorders, projectors, language laboratories, radio and television sets, and loud-speakers.
7. Educational authorities should sponsor research on and development of new teaching materials.

G. *Suggestions for international action*

1. Combined research into the vocabulary of specialised languages.
2. Establishment of a *card-index* of institutions and private persons working on linguistic research and its application, and of published or unpublished works relating to this field.
3. Agreement on *teaching terminology* (with multilingual equivalents) based on examples of parallel sentences in European languages.
4. Bilateral or multilateral arrangements for interchanges of students (by study abroad as an integral part of the language course, by service

as *assistants*) and of serving teachers by post-to-post exchange.

5. Participation by selected teachers of one country in short courses organised primarily for teachers of another country, in order to promote the cross-fertilisation of thinking about the teaching of modern languages in Europe.

6. Agreement upon standards for tape and film widths, running speeds, technical quality of sound and picture, labelling indications, etc.

7. Agreement upon minimum requirements concerning performance and robustness for such equipment as tape-recorders, projectors, language laboratories, radio and television sets, and loud-speakers.

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